

Thought for the Week

Thought for the Week is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.

For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>

Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)

Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.

Wednesday 13th October

Psalm 132

Today the church remembers Edward the Confessor, and our Psalm recalls the vow of David to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant, the holy chest that contained the tablets of stone with the 10 commandments – a vow that led to the building of his son Solomon's great temple in Jerusalem, and subsequent rebuildings, with the last remnant, the Western Wall, still a centre for Jewish devotion and pilgrimage today. What a legacy for David; just one of his legacies of course.

David lived around 1000 years before Christ and Edward was born just over 1000 years after Christ. He was the son of the delightfully nicknamed 'Ethelred the Unready' and came to the English throne in 1042, reigning for 24 years – quite a stretch in those very unstable times. He was a pious man, practising his Christian faith in generosity to the poor and in hospitality, as well as promoting peace and harmony and avoiding war. When young, Edward took a vow of his own – to go on pilgrimage to Rome; but having gained the throne he realised that such a journey would leave his kingdom vulnerable; so his vow was commuted to endowing a monastery dedicated to St Peter.

Edward's political legacy was dubious since there were several claims to the throne after his death, which led to the most famous battle in English history, in 1066. The victory of William of Normandy in that battle itself had a huge and lasting legacy in our history and culture.

On the spiritual level, Edward left another lasting legacy. This was the abbey church which he endowed at Thorney Island in London, which we now know as Westminster Abbey.

Edward was canonised, or declared a saint about 100 years after his death and when at the same time his remains were transferred into a special shrine in the abbey they were said to be undecayed.

The landscape around the abbey has changed so much over the centuries that you would never know it used to stand on an island. But this church has become a great centre and inspiration for the spirituality and identity of England and even the UK.

It's a royal church, with coronations, royal weddings and funerals taking place there, and it is a World Heritage site, with visitors from across the world pouring through its gates. In 2020, the year of Covid, there were just 222 thousand visitors! In a normal year it would be between 1.5 and 2 million visitors. No doubt the costs are commensurate with these figures, and indeed there were news headlines last year that the Abbey was set to lose £12 million over Covid closures.

Our Cathedral at Llandaff is relatively modest although it too has a long and honourable history of prayer, worship, and pilgrimage. Our visitor numbers are much smaller; which in turn means that our income depends less on visitors and more, much more, on regular committed donors.

Our potential and our spiritual significance is harder to measure; it is immeasurable; one could not put a price on the value of this holy place for so many: for those who come to light a candle, to pray, to find some peace even just for a moment, who walk past hearing music from organ or choir, who catch a glimpse through the doors of a congregation in worship, who sit in the Garden of Remembrance to spend time thinking of their loved ones departed; or for the children who come with their school and gaze around the biggest building they have seen and often the first church they have ever been into. And all that is without starting to think about those who worship here week by week and who are regularly nourished in heart and soul through Word and sacrament here.

As we benefit from this place it is our responsibility to pass it on to future generations for their spiritual benefit also. If you would like to support the Cathedral or to increase your support, please use the links provided to make a one-off, or still better, a regular donation and do also gift aid your donation which increases it by 25%.

Your generous giving will help to maintain and grow the legacy of this lovely Cathedral of Llandaff.